

A Statement on Fluid Needs
Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee of the Coaching Association of Canada

October 9, 2003

Fluids for Athletes – how much should an active person drink? Recent articles have reported that “too much water can make you sick”. While it is possible to consume too much water, dehydration continues to be a much greater threat to performance and health.

How do you know how much to consume? The Position of Dietitians of Canada, the American Dietetic Association and the American College of Sport Medicine “Nutrition and Athletic Performance” was published in 2000. The Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee (SNAC) of the Coaching Association of Canada has produced a nutrition tip sheet “Fluids for Athletes”. It summarizes the recommendations from the three professional organizations, providing a quick reference for coaches, athletes and active Canadians. This nutrition tip sheet is available on www.coach.ca/eng/nutrition/resources.cfm.

The amount of fluid you need depends on a number of factors – the weather conditions (temperature and humidity), the activity (type and duration) and your body (age, size, gender and sweat rate). A person needs fluid before, during and after exercise. Consuming 150 to 350 mL every 15 to 20 minutes during physical activity is recommended. In general, individuals should strive to keep their body weight loss during physical activity in the heat to less than 2% of total body mass – i.e. for a 70 kg person this is less than 1.4 kg body weight loss (or 1.4 L water) due to sweating. In some situations, carbohydrate added to the fluid will benefit performance. Electrolytes can also play a role. Talk to an expert to understand your needs.

Are you looking for a professional who can help you? The Coaching Association of Canada’s Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee (SNAC) is made up of registered dietitians and exercise scientists specialized in nutrition for physical activity and affiliated with the Canadian Sport Centres. Visit www.coach.ca/eng/ to find out how to contact the Canadian Sport Centres and how to access dedicated service providers – registered dietitians, sport scientists, physicians, therapists, etc.

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) is the professional organization of exercise scientists and health and fitness consultants. Members are actively involved in researching and delivering the latest developments in fitness advice. Further information can be found at the Web site www.csep.ca/index.asp.

The Dietitians of Canada Web site www.dietitians.ca allows you to search for a registered dietitian in your area.

Are you looking for information? The Position of Dietitians of Canada, the American Dietetic Association and the American College of Sport Medicine “Nutrition and Athletic Performance” is available at www.coach.ca/eng/nutrition/resources.cfm and at

http://www.dietitians.ca/news/highlights_positions.html. Other nutrition related position papers, including "Vegetarian Diets" are available on the latter site.

The Coaching Association of Canada's Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee (SNAC) has been updating a number of nutrition tip sheets. These documents provide practical tips for coaches and athletes. While the information was prepared for athletes, the nutrition tip sheets can be used by many groups.